RAINBOW'S END *A Novel*

By REX BEACH

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CHAPTER XV—Continued.

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Esteban raised himself to his elbow. "You think it's a myth, a joke. Well, it's not. I know where it is. I found it!"

Norine gasped; Johnnie spoke soothingly:

"Don't get excited, old man; you've talked too much today."

"Ha!" Esteban fell back upon his pillow. "I haven't any fever. I'm as sane as ever I was. That treasure exists, and that doubloon gave me the clue to its whereabouts. Don Esteban, my father, was cunning; he could hide things better than a magpie. It remained for me to discover his trick."

"He is raving," O'Reilly declared, with a sharp stare at his friend.

The girl turned loyally to her patient. "I'll believe you, Mr. Varona. I always believe everything about buried

"I Know Where It Is. I Found It!"

treasure. The bigger the treasure the more implicitly I believe in it. I simply adore pirates and such things; if I were a man I'd be one. Do you know, I've always been tempted to bury my money and then go look for it."

"There is no doubt that my father had a great deal of money at one time," Esteban began; "he was the richest man in the richest city of Cuba."

O'Reilly shook his head dubiously and braced his back against a tree trunk; there was a look of mild disapprobation on his face as he listened to the familiar story of Don Esteban and the slave, Sebastian. When Esteban had finished, Norine drew a deep breath.

"Oh! That lays over any story I ever heard. To think that the deeds and the jewels and everything are in the well at this minute! Suppose somebody finds it?" Norine was aghast at the thought.

"Not much chance of that. The treasure has lain there for a generation, and the story itself is almost forgotten." Esteban turned triumphantly to O'Reilly, saying, "Now, then, do you think I'm so crazy?"

O'Reilly didn't have it in his heart to say exactly what he really thought. What he more than half suspected was that some favored fancy had formed lodgment in Esteban's brain.

"It's an interesting theory," he admitted. "Anyhow, there is no danger of the treasure being uncovered very soon. Cueto had a good look and made himself ridiculous. You'll have ample chance to do likewise when the war is over."

"You must help me find it," said Esteban. "We shall all share the fortune equally, you two, Rosa and I."

"We? Why should we share in it?" Norine asked.

"I owe it to you. Didn't O'Reilly rescue me from a dungeon? Haven't you nursed me back to health? Don't I owe my life to you both?"

"Nonsense! I, for one, sha'n't take a dollar of it."

"Oh, but you must. I insist. Nursing is a poorly paid profession. Wouldn't you like to be rich?"

"Profession! Poorly paid?" Norine sputtered, angrily. "As if I'd take pay!"

"As if I would accept a great service and forget it, like some miserable beggar!" Esteban replied stiffly.

O'Reilly laughed out. "Don't let's quarrel over the spoil until we get it," said he. "That's the way with all treasure-hunters. They invariably fall out and go to fighting. To avoid bloodshed, I'll agree to sell my interest cheap, for cash. My share of the famous Varona fortune going for a dollar!"

"There! He doesn't believe a word of it," Esteban said.

Norine gave an impatient shrug. "Some people wouldn't believe they were alive unless they saw their breath on a looking-glass. Goodness! How I hate a sneering skeptic, a wet blanket."

O'Reilly rose with one arm shielding his face. "In the interest of friendship, I withdraw. A curse on these buried treasures, anyhow. We shall yet come to blows."

As he walked away he heard Norine say: "Don't pay any attention to him. We'll go and dig it up ourselves, and we won't wait until the war is over."

An hour later Esteban and his nurse still had their heads together. They were still talking of golden ingots and pearls from the Caribbean the size of plums when they looked up to see O'Reilly running toward them. He was visibly excited; he waved and shouted at them. He was panting when he arrived.

"News! From Matanzas!" he cried. "Gomez' man has arrived."

Esteban struggled to rise, but Norine restrained him. "Rosa? What does he say? Quick!"

"Good news! She left the Pan de Matanzas with the two negroes. She went into the city before Cobo's raid."

Esteban collapsed limply. He closed his eyes, his face was very white. He crossed himself weakly.

"The letter is definite. It seems they were starving. They obeyed Weyler's bando. They're in Matanzas now."

"Do you hear, Esteban?" Norine shook her patient by the shoulder. "She's alive. Oh, can't you see that it always pays to believe the best?"

"Alive! Safe!" Esteban whispered. His eyes, when he opened them, were swimming; he clutched Norine's hand tightly; his other hand he extended to O'Reilly. "A reconcentrado! In Matanzas! Well, that's good. We have friends there—they'll not let her starve. This makes a new man of me. See! I'm strong again. I'll go to her."

"You'll go?" quickly cried Miss Evans. "You'll go! You're not strong enough. It would be suicide. You, with a price upon your head! Everybody knows you there. Matanzas is virtually a walled city. There's sickness, too—yellow fever, typhus—"

"Exactly. And hunger, also. I suppose no one has taken Rosa in? Those concentration camps aren't nice places for a girl."

"But wait! I have friends in Washington. They're influential. They will cable the American consul to look after her. Anyhow, you mustn't think of returning to Matanzas," Norine faltered; her voice caught unexpectedly and she turned her face away.

O'Reilly nodded shortly. "You're a sick man," he agreed. "There's no need for both of us to go."

Esteban looked up. "Then you—"

"I leave at once. The Old Man has given me a commission to General Betancourt, and I'll be on my way in an hour. The moon is young; I must cross the trocha before—"

"That trocha!" Esteban was up on his elbow again. "Be careful there, O'Reilly. They keep a sharp lookout, and it's guarded with barbed wire. Be sure you cut every strand. Yes, and muffle your horse's hoofs, too, in crossing the railroad track. That's how we were detected. Pablo's horse struck a rail, and they fired at the sound. He fell at the first volley, riddled. Oh, I know that trocha!"

"D—— the trocha!" O'Reilly exclaimed. "At last I've got a chance to do something. God! How long I've waited."

Esteban drew O'Reilly's tense form down and embraced his friend, after the fashion of his people. "She has been waiting, too," he said, huskily. "We Varonas are good waiters, O'Reilly. Rosa will never cease waiting until you come. Tell her, for me—"

Norine withdrew softly out of earshot. There were a lump in her throat and a pain in her breast. She had acquired a peculiar and affectionate interest in this unhappy girl whom she had never seen, and she had learned to respect O'Reilly's love. The yearning that had pulsed in his voice a moment before had stirred her deeply; it awoke a throb in her own bosom, for O'Reilly was dear to her. The pacificos, according to all reports, were dying like flies in the prison camps. Norine wondered if there might not be a terrible heartache at the end of O'Reilly's quest? Her face was grave and worried when, hearing him speak to her, she turned to take his outstretched hand.

"You will be careful, won't you?" she implored. "And you'll be stout of heart, no matter what occurs?"

He nodded. "It's a long way back here to Cubitas. You may not see or hear from me again."

"I understand." She choked miserably. "You mean you may not come back. Oh, Johnnie!"

"Tut, tut! We O'Reillys have more lives than a litter of cats. I mean I may not see you until the war is over and we meet in New York. Well, we've been good pals, and—I'm glad you came to Cuba." His grasp upon her two hands was painful.

"You must go, I know, and I wouldn't try to keep you, but—" Norine faltered, then impulsively she drew him down and kissed him full upon the lips. "For Rosa!" she whispered. Her eyes were shining as she watched him pass swiftly out of sight.

CHAPTER XVI.

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The Trocha.

Of all the military measures employed by the Spaniards in their wars against Cuban independence, perhaps the most unique was the trocha—trench or traverse. Martinez Campos during the Ten Years' war built the first trocha just west of the Cubitas mountains where the waist of the island is narrowest. Not until Weyler's time were the two methods of pacification, the trocha and the concentration camp, developed to their fullest extent. Although his trochas hindered the free movement of Cuban troops and his prison camps decimated the peaceful population of several provinces, the Spanish cause gained little. Both trenches and prison camps became Spanish graveyards.

At the time Johnnie O'Reilly set out for Matanzas the war—a war without battle, without victory, without defeat—had settled into a grim contest of endurance. In the east, where the insurrectos were practically supreme, there was food of a sort, but beyond the Jucaro-Moron trocha—the old one of Campos' building—the country was sick. Immediately west of it, in that district which the Cubans called Las Villas, the land lay dying, while the entire provinces of Matanzas, Habana and Pinar del Rio were practically dead. These three were skeletons, picked bare of flesh by Weyler's beak.

The Jucaro-Moron trocha had been greatly strengthened since Campos' day. It followed the line of the trans-insular railway. Dotted at every quarter of a mile along the grade were little forts connected by telephone and telegraph lines. Between these fortinas were sentry stations of logs or railroad ties. Eyes were keen, rifles were ready, challenges were sharp, and countersigns were quickly given on the Jucaro-Moron trocha.

In O'Reilly's party there were three men besides himself—the ever-faithful Jacket, a wrinkled old Camagueyan who knew the bridle trails of his province as a fox knows the tracks to its lair, and a silent guajiro from farther west, detailed to accompany the expedition because of his wide acquaintance with the devastated districts. Both guides, having crossed the trocha more than once, affected to scorn its terrors, and their easy confidence reassured O'Reilly in spite of Esteban's parting admonition.

The American had not dreamed of taking Jacket along, but when he came to announce his departure the boy had flatly refused to be left behind.

Fifty miles of hard riding brought the party to the trocha; they neared it on the second morning after leaving Cubitas, and sought a secluded camping spot. Later in the day Hilario, the old Camagueyan, slipped away to reconnoiter. He returned at twilight, but volunteered no report of what he had discovered. After an insistent cross-examination O'Reilly wrung from him the reluctant admission that ev-

Hard Riding Brought the Party to the Trocha.

erything seemed favorable for a crossing some time that night, and that he had selected a promising point. Beyond that the old man would say nothing.

Supper, a simple meal, was quickly disposed of. Then followed a long, dispiriting wait, for a gibbous moon rode high in the sky and the guides refused to stir so long as it remained there. It was a still night; in the jungle no air was stirring, and darkness brought forth a torment of mosquitoes. As day died the woods awoke to sounds of bird and insect life; strange, raucous calls pealed forth, some familiar, others strange and unaccustomed. Sitting there in the dark, bedeviled by a pest of insects, mocked at by these mysterious voices, and looking forward to a hazardous enterprise, O'Reilly began to curse his vivid imagination and to envy the impassiveness of his companions. Even Jacket, he noted, endured the strain better; the boy was cheerful, philosophical, quite unimpressed by his surroundings. When the mosquitoes became unbearable he put on his trousers, with some reluctance and much ceremony.

Midnight brought a moist, warm breeze and a few formless clouds which served at times to dimly obscure the moon. Watching the clouds, O'Reilly hoped that they might prove to be the heralds of a storm. None came. When the moon had finally crept down into the treetops old Hilario stepped upon his cigarette, then began silently to saddle up. The others followed with alacrity, and fell in behind him as he led the way into the forest.

When they had covered a couple of miles Hilario reined in and the others crowded close. Ahead, dimly discernible against the night sky, there appeared to be a thinning of the woods. After listening for a moment or two, Hilario dismounted and slipped away; the three riders sat their saddles with ears strained.

Hilario returned with word that all was well, and each man dismounted to muffle the feet of his horse with rags and strips of gunnysack provided for the purpose. Then, one by one, they moved forward to the edge of the clearing. The trocha lay before them.

O'Reilly felt a pair of reins thrust into his hand and found Hilario examining a large pair of tinner's shears.

"Do you wish me to go with you?" he inquired of the guide.

The latter shook his head. "Antonio will go; he will keep watch while I clear a path. If anything goes wrong, wait here. Don't ride away until we have time—"

"Never fear. I won't desert you," the American reassured him.

The two white-clad figures slipped away, became indistinct, and then disappeared. The night was hot, the mosquitoes hummed dismally and settled in clouds upon the waiting pair, maddening them with their poison. A half-hour passed, then the two ghostly figures materialized once more.

"Dios!" grumbled Hilario. "There are many strings to this Spanish guitar. What a row when they discover that I have played a Cuban danzon upon it." The old man seemed less surly than before.

"Is the way clear?" O'Reilly inquired.

"As far as the railroad, yes. We heard voices there, and came back. We will have to cut our way forward after we cross the track. Now, then, follow me without a sound."

Leading his horse by the bit ring, Hilario moved out into the clearing, followed once more by his three companions. In spite of all precautions the animals made a tremendous racket, or so it seemed, and, despite Hilario's twisting and turnings, it was impossible to avoid an occasional loop of barbed wire, therefore flesh and clothing suffered grievously. But at length the party brought up under the railroad embankment and paused. As carefully as might be the four men ascended the slope, crossed the rails and descended into the ditch on the other side. Another moment and they encountered a taut strand of barbed wire. The metallic snip of Hilario's shears sounded like a pistol shot to O'Reilly. Into the maze of strands they penetrated, yard by yard, clipping and carefully laying back the wire as they went. Progress was slow; they had to feel their way; the sharp barbs brought blood and muttered profanity at every step.

None of the four ever knew what gave the alarm. Their first intimation of discovery came with a startling "Quien vive?" hurled at them from somewhere at their backs.

An instant and the challenge was followed by a Mauser shot. Other reports rang out as the sentry emptied his rifle in their direction.

"So! They are shooting bats!" Hilario grunted.

Antonio swung about and cocked his Remington, but the other spoke sharply. "Fool! If you shoot they will see the fire and riddle us. A curse on the spider that spun this web!"

It was a test of courage to crouch among the charred stumps, enmeshed in that cruel tangle of wire, while the night was stabbed by daggers of fire and while the trocha awoke to the wild alarm. From somewhere in the distance came a shouted command and the sound of running feet, suddenly putting an end to further inaction. Antonio began to hack viciously with his machete, in an effort to aid Hilario's labors. The sound of his sturdy blows betrayed the party's whereabouts so clearly that finally the older man could restrain himself no longer.

"Give it to them, compadres; it is a game that we can play!"

O'Reilly had been gripping his rifle tensely, his heart in his throat, his pulses pounding. As near a panic as he had ever been, he found, oddly enough, that the mere act of throwing his weapon to his shoulder and firing it calmed him. The kick of the gun subdued his excitement and cleared his brain. He surprised himself by directing Jacket in a cool, authoritative voice, to shoot low. When he had emptied the magazine he led two of the horses forward. Then, grasping his own machete, he joined in clearing a pathway.

It seemed an interminable time ere they had extricated themselves from the trap, but finally they succeeded and gained the welcome shelter of the woods, pausing inside its shelter to cut the muffles from their horses' feet. By this time the defenders of the trocha were pouring volley after volley at random into the night.

Now that the skirmish was over, Jacket began to boast of his part in it.

"Ha! Perhaps they'll know better

Into the Maze of Strands They Penetrated.

than to show themselves the next time I come this way," said he. "You saw me, didn't you? Well, I made a few Spanish widows tonight."

When no one disputed his assertion Jacket proceeded further in praise of himself, only to break off with a wordless cry of dismay.

"What's the matter?" Johnnie inquired.

"Look! Behold me!" wailed the hero. "I have left the half of my beautiful trousers on that barbed wire!"

Antonio swung a leg over his saddle, saying: "Come along, amigos; we have fifty leagues ahead of us. The war will be over while we stand here gossiping."

O'Reilly's adventures on his swift ride through Las Villas have no part in this story. It is only necessary to say that they were numerous and varied, that O'Reilly experienced excitement a-plenty, and that upon more than one occasion he was forced to think and to act quickly in order to avoid a clash with some roving guerrilla band.

Food became a problem immediately after the travelers had crossed the trocha. Such apprehensive families as still lurked in the woods were liberal enough—Antonio, by the way, knew all of them—but they had little to give, and, in consequence, O'Reilly's party learned the taste of wild fruits, berries and palmetto hearts. Once they managed to kill a small pig, the sole survivor of some obscure country tragedy, but the rest of the time their meat, when there was any, consisted of iguanas—those big, repulsive lizards—and jutias, the Cuban field rats.

Fortunately there was no shortage of food for the horses, and so, despite the necessity of numerous detours, the party made good time. They crossed into Matanzas, pushed on over rolling hills, through sweeping savannas, past empty clearings and deserted villages, to their journey's end. A fortunate encounter with a rebel partida from General Betancourt's army enabled them to reach headquarters without loss of time, and one afternoon, worn, haggard and hungry, they dismounted in front of that gallant officer's hut.

General Betancourt read the letter which O'Reilly handed him, then looked up with a smile.

"So! You are one of Gomez' Americans, eh? Well, I would never have known it, to look at you; the sun and the wind have made you into a very good Cuban. And your clothes— One might almost mistake you for a Cuban cabinet officer."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

A Cinch.

"Into each life some rain must fall," said the philosopher.

"Yep. Especially if he lives in this territory during the month of April."

WOMEN FARMING IN WESTERN CANADA

Success Has Followed All Their Efforts.

On the train from Edmonton to Winnipeg the writer took a seat beside a soldier who had returned from the front. On his breast he wore the beautiful distinguished service medal. One coat sleeve was armless, and on his left cheek he bore a scar that he would carry to his grave. He had served his country faithfully and well. At the first call for soldiers in August, 1914, he hastened to the recruiting office, leaving his 320-acre farm, with its crop ready for harvest, a full equipment of farm implements, plenty of horses, and a wife. The wife should not be last on the list for she proved the master of the situation, and loyally took hold of the question of production, while her husband was on his way to fight the Hun. And she succeeded. In 1915 she succeeded, and again in 1916, and when her husband returned in 1917 she was able to show some contemplated farm buildings completed, the indebtedness of the farm paid off, a considerable addition to the stock, and the land ready for a 1917 crop. This was the story told by the soldier, and wasn't he a proud man! He was now ready to do what he could to keep up the period of prosperity and provide food for the allies. The women of Canada have done nobly during the struggle.

Among the most successful farmers of the Oak Lake district, Manitoba, are the Misses Clara and Beatrice Forward, who, for the past fourteen years, have farmed their own land, doing all the regular work on the farm, such as plowing, seeding, summer fallowing and reaping. They have been especially successful with stock, and have a splendid herd of shorthorns, both purebred and grade. At the recent Brandon sale they purchased a new purebred stock bull for $700. Their herd was last year increased by 23 calves.

Miss R. M. Hillman of Keeler, Saskatchewan, is another successful woman farmer. She has gone in extensively for grain growing, and farms 1,120 acres. She also owns some of the finest Percheron horses in Saskatchewan.

The prairie now boasts of many women who have had more or less success, though few are farming on the same large scale as Miss Hillman and the Misses Forward. These women have demonstrated, and are still demonstrating, that a versatile woman may be just as good and successful a farmer as her brother.

There are other women, too, on the Canadian prairies, who, though they have not had thrown upon them the responsibilities of "running a farm," have been decided factors in making the farm a success. They assist their husbands by keeping the farm accounts, reducing the grocer's bills by their management of the poultry and butter, taking care of the house, and, very often, proving good advisers in the economic management of the men and general conduct of the farm work. The man who moves to Canada carries with him a wonderful asset in a good managing wife.—Advertisement.

Same as United States.

Two privates had been discussing the French language. Silence fell between them for a minute, when one spoke up and asked: "Say, what's camouflage in French?"

Much Depends.

Billie—Brown is a great pianist.

Milly—Does he play while people eat or while they talk?—Town Topics.

Norway is planning to raise its own seeds and thus become independent of other countries.

Wisconsin is to have 100 sections of land devoted to a wild game farm.

It is difficult to judge a woman by the things she doesn't say.